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SIPDIS

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/22/2018  
TAGS: [PREL](#) [NATO](#) [GG](#) [RS](#) [TU](#)  
SUBJECT: MFA WANTS TO MAINTAIN NRC PREPCOM AS CHANNEL FOR  
DIALOGUE

REF: STATE 100790

Classified By: Pol-Mil Counselor A Godfrey, Reasons 1.4 (b,d)

¶1. (C) We delivered reftel demarche to MFA NATO Policy Department Head Gulhan Ulutekin on September 22. While she took our points on board, Ulutekin said Turkey views the PrepCom as a useful tool to maintain contact with Russia, particularly on issues in the long-term interest of the Alliance, including cooperation on counterterrorism, counternarcotics, ISAF and Afghanistan. Ulutekin said Turkey supports the language in a draft SPC paper proposing ways to balance the need to not conduct business as usual with Russia while maintaining channels for communication on issues of common interest. She acknowledged the problematic optics of NATO holding a meeting with Russia under current circumstances, but disagreed with the view that the PrepCom's only purpose is to prepare for meetings among NRC ambassadors. She took note of our suggestion to wait until at least after the October 15 Geneva Conference before taking a decision on whether to schedule the next PrepCom meeting, and our view that dialogue with Russia can be maintained at below the Prepcom level through ad hoc meetings. She said she will relay these views to her superiors and to the Turkish Mission at NATO, but predicted that Turkey will continue to prefer to retain the Prepcom as a channel of communication with Russia.

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